

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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COUNTRY	East Germany	REPORT NO.	
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1. When Hans Reichelt, formerly chief of the organization department of the Democratic Peasant Party (DBD), was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, he was succeeded in his party job by Dietrich Besler (or Beseler). The latter was trained in the Soviet Union, and upon his return was a member of the SED. He was assigned to the DBD and functioned as its chief for organization under the state committee for Brandenburg; later he was Minister of Agriculture of Brandenburg. He is said to have no contact with farmers.
2. Reichelt, up to the middle of May 1953, was Minister only in name; the work of the Ministry was still being conducted by the former Minister Paul Scholz, ostensibly for the purpose of training Reichelt.
3. A newly prominent person in DBD affairs is one Merke, formerly business manager of the state organization for Saxony-Anhalt. He was the son of a landowner in East Prussia, who was a lieutenant during the war, was trained in the U.S.S.R., and was assigned to the DBD by the SED. As a "new farmer" in Kreis Delitzsch, he founded in 1951 the first collective farm (IGP) in Saxony-Anhalt. He is now deputy president of the Leipzig District Council.
4. The general secretary of the party, Berthold Rose, is seriously ill, and is in a sanatorium in central Germany. He is a friend of Wilhelm Schröder, formerly Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in Thuringia, who was recently removed from office, supposedly on account of ill health. Rose was rebuked by the Central Committee of the SED because no progress had been made in the reeducation of the peasantry; and it has been planned to dismiss the chief of the training department, (Eduard or Hans) von Schnitzler.
5. In May 1953 only 50% of the membership contributions were collected by the DBD. This is the lowest figure since 1950. At the same time, the circulation of the party's paper Bauern-Echo has declined considerably.

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6. It is reported that the DBD is to be dissolved at the end of the current fiscal year, and that all its members will be taken into the SED without further examination.
7. Source asserts that there are now 4,800 collective farms in the Russian zone, and that their membership includes 32% of all peasants with a holding of less than 15 hectares.

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